

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GDR IMPROVES WORKING CONDITIONS FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS

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1. EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1976, THE GDR INTRODUCED TWO
NEW MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR FOREIGN
JOURNALISTS ACCREDITED TO THE GDR. THESE JOURNALISTS
MAY NOW APPROACH GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES DIRECTLY WITHOUT
HAVING TO GO THROUGH THE MFA PRESS SECTION AS BEFORE.
IN ADDITION, DEPENDENTS OF ACCREDITED JOURNALISTS ARE
NOW ENTITLED TO "GRENZEMFEHLUNGEN", DOCUMENTS THAT
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FACILITATE TRANSIT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN

AND BETWEEN THE GDR AND THE FRG.

2. FRG JOURNALISTS ACCREDITED IN EAST BERLIN
REPORT AN INCREASINGLY BUSINESS-LIKE ATTITUDE TOWARD
THEM ON THE PART OF GDR OFFICIALS. ALTHOUGH HIGH-LEVEL
PARTY FUNCTIONARIES REMAIN INACCESSIBLE, THESE JOURNALISTS
SUCCESS IN DEALING WITH INDIVIDUAL MINISTRIES
DIRECTLY IN THE WEEKS SINCE JULY 1.

3. THE FIRST INDICATION THAT THE GDR WOULD INTRODUCE
THE ABOVE MEASURES CAME IN EARLY MAY AT A BALL HELD IN
HONOR OF THE OPENING OF EAST BERLIN'S PALAST DER REPUBLIK
TO WHICH ACCREDITED JOURNALISTS WERE INVITED. SED
GENERAL SECRETARY ERICH HONECKER AND OTHER POLITBURO
MEMBERS PRESENT MADE A SPECIAL POINT OF TALKING INFORMALLY
WITH JOURNALISTS. THE POLITBURO MEMBER MOST
RESPONSIBLE FOR PRESS MATTERS, WERNER LAMBERZ, EVEN
SAT DOWN WITH SEVERAL OF THE BETTER-KNOWN FRG JOURNALISTS
FOR AN INFORMAL ONE-HOUR TALK IN WHICH HE ASKED THEM
TO EXPRESS ANY COMPLAINTS THEY HAD ABOUT WORKING CONDITIONS
IN THE GDR. ON LEAVING, HE TOLD THE JOURNALISTS TO FEEL
FREE TO CALL HIM DIRECTLY AT ANY TIME IF THEY SHOULD
HAVE PROBLEMS. NONE OF THE WESTERN JOURNALISTS HAVE
RESPONDED TO LAMBERZ' INVITATION AS YET SINCE THEY CONSIDER
IT WAS MERELY AN EXPRESSION OF GOOD WILL RATHER THAN
A CONCRETE PROPOSAL. HONECKER ALSO SPENT TIME WITH
WESTERN JOURNALISTS ON THIS OCCASION. AFTER SAYING
GOODBYE AND PROCEEDING TOWARD THE EXIT, HE PAUSED,
RETURNED TO THE JOURNALISTS IN A DEFENSIVE TONE, "ONE LAST POINT,
GENTLEMEN. THERE IS ONE THING I CAN ASSURE YOU OF.
THE GDR STANDS ON FIRM GROUND", WHEREUPON HE TURNED AND LEFT.

4. ALTHOUGH THE GDR HAS RECENTLY INTRODUCED
MEASURES DESIGNED TO IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR
ACCREDITED FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, CONTINUES TO
REFUSE ACCREDITATION TO AMERICAN AND OTHER JOURNALISTS BASED
IN WEST BERLIN, AND THE FRG. POLANSKY

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